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SENSITIVE
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FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/PPD, EUR/RPM AND EUR/ERA
OSD FOR WINTERNITZ

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: ZAGREB WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT - MARCH 5, 2008

11. (SBU) CROATIAN PEACEKEEPING TROOPS RECEIVE TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS TRAINING PRIOR TO DEPLOYMENT:

In late February, the GOC Office of Human Rights organized the first "train the trainers" program focusing solely on trafficking in persons for ten Croatian Military officers. These officers will now instruct Croatian and foreign troops on "anti-trafficking in persons" issues during their regular preparations for deployment abroad to participate in international peacekeeping missions. The Government Office of Human Rights, in response to USG urging, arranged these special training programs with the Ministry of Defense as part of the semi-annual preparations for deploying peacekeepers, in addition to the basic information about TIP that was already part of their UN approved curriculum. (DFisk)

12. (U) GROWING POPULAR SUPPORT FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP:

Two leading polling agencies found at the end of February that support for Croatia's NATO membership had increased, although their findings differed significantly. Puls Agency conducted a phone survey among 600 Croatian citizens and found that as many as 67 percent of those polled supported "accepting an invitation to join NATO;" 21.4 percent were against, and 11.5 percent were undecided. The pollsters link this high support to the recent developments surrounding the independence of Kosovo. The other agency, Promocija Plus (PP), polled 1300 citizens; 54.2 percent supported Croatia's membership in NATO, 37 percent opposed and 8.8 percent were undecided. While lower than the Puls numbers, the PP's figures still represented a several point increase over previous data, indicating a continued upward trend in Croatian public support for NATO membership. (ZTomic)

13. (SBU) COMMITTEE FOR REFERENDUM ON NATO:

While public support for NATO continues to increase, at least one initiative is underway to attempt to force the government to hold a public referendum on NATO accession. The initiative originally came from a group of bloggers (BORNA) close to the non-parliamentary party Green List, an associate member of the European Green Party. A Committee for Referendum on NATO was founded in late February by this group and other independent citizens and NGOs. Their goal is to collect 450,000 signatures (ten percent of registered voters) during the first two weeks of April under the slogan "People decide - a referendum on NATO!" The Committee invoked Article 86 of the Croatian Constitution which stipulates that the "Croatian Parliament shall call a referendum...when so demanded by ten percent of all voters in the Republic of Croatia." No such referendum has been held since Croatia's independence, and unless the group shows remarkable organizational skills, we think it is unlikely that they will succeed in collecting the required number of signatures. (ZTomic)

